

Earlier this week, Congress Passed a Bill to Fund Education Jobs, Address State Budget Shortfalls

U.S. Representative Rush Holt (NJ-12) was in Spotswood today to highlight new emergency federal money to keep teachers in the classroom. Holt was joined by New Jersey teachers who recently were laid off. Earlier this week, Congress passed with Holt's support emergency funding to keep teachers in the classroom and to provide states with funding to reduce budget shortfalls. The bill, which President Obama has signed into law, includes \$268 million to keep an estimated 3,900 teachers in the classroom in New Jersey, including 159 in Holt's 12th Congressional District, which includes parts of Somerset, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties.

"Our children do not get a second chance to succeed in school, and our future economic growth depends on a well educated and innovative workforce. We cannot afford to short change our children by laying off our teachers," Holt said.

One teacher, Deborah Porcelli, shared her experience. Porcelli was a 2nd grade teacher for 3 years in Edison until her Reduction In Force. Before that she spent a year as a 2nd

grade teacher in Ewing. She came to teaching as a second career after raising her sons. She went back to school, got certified and started to teach.

"I do not want unemployment insurance. I want to do the job I love and work hard every day. I want to teach students," Porcelli said. "I am so excited at even the possibility I could return to teaching this school year."

Spotswood Superintendent Walter Uszenski praised the funding:

"The hallmark of Spotswood School District is the teachers and staff. All our teachers and the staff members are hard working, intelligent, dedicated and caring professionals. It is a great day for me when we can retain the exemplary teachers and staff that we had to let go due to budget cuts," Dr. Uszenski said.

On Monday, the New Jersey School Boards Association released a survey that found that 80 percent of school districts expected to have fewer teachers, including nearly 50 percent of school districts that lost up to 5 percent of last year's staffing levels.

The U.S. Department of Education is expected to finalize guidance on the state application Friday, giving New Jersey the chance to apply for the funding and distribute it to local school districts in the next few weeks.

"The reason the House came back this week and the reason why I voted for this bill is so that we can get this funding to our schools as soon as possible," Holt said.